Department of Toxic Substances Control

Public Participation Manual

CHAPTER 6 SECTION F
Public Meetings

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Overview

There are several types of meetings which may be conducted during the site mitigation or hazardous waste management processes (refer to Exhibit 6-24, "Types of Public Participation Meetings"). Meetings are held to provide and exchange information during DTSC's decision-making process. Meetings may include other agencies, local officials and government agencies, businesses, environmental groups, impacted communities, and the interested public to discuss DTSC site- or facility-related activities on a certain project. This subsection identifies the types of meetings which may be used during a project and those activities required to conduct each type of meeting.

Responsibilities

Public Meetings Task Responsibilities		
Public Participation Specialist	**PPS, PM, or clerical support**	**Project Manager**
♦ Identify need/objective/time frame. ♦ Identify location. ♦ Coordinate the development of the agenda. ♦ Coordinate development of presentations for all participants. ♦ Review/approve presentations. ♦ Conduct dry runs. ♦ Approve graphics/handout text.	♦ Make meeting room arrangements. ♦ Arrange for interpreter/court reporter, if needed. ♦ Prepare meeting supplies (sign-in sheets, name tags, comment forms).	♦ Coordinate with PPS on meeting plans. ♦ Prepare presentations. ♦ Participate in dry runs. ♦ Coordinate with PPS on graphics. ♦ Participate in meeting. ♦ Develop graphics/handout text.

Exhibit 6-24

Types of Public Participation Meetings

MEETING TYPE	DEFINITION
Briefings	Meetings designed to provide participants (usually officials or decision makers) with the information they need to answer questions they are likely to receive about the site from community members.
Workshops	Semi-structured gatherings or seminars to assist the public in gaining a better understanding of complex or technical project-specific issues.
Open Houses	Informal gatherings at which community members drop in and talk directly with individual DTSC staff or other specialists about specific project concerns and questions.
Community Meeting	Structured meetings which include formal presentations, Community meetings give all interested parties the opportunity to discuss project issues with each other and the regulatory personnel making the decisions.
EIR Scoping Meeting	Agency or public scoping meetings are held at the beginning of the EIR process to obtain input on specific environmental issues which should be addressed in the EIR.
Remedial Action Plan (RAP)/Removal Action Workplan (RAW) Meeting	Formal meeting, held during the required minimum 30-day public comment period, on the draft RAP/draft RAW designed to present information and to discuss and receive input on the proposed plan. (Note: A RAW meeting may not be required if public interest is low.)
OTHER MEETINGS: Small Group	Informal meeting with community groups to discuss project issues/concerns of particular interest to a group.
Technical Review Committee (TRC) Meeting	A meeting of a team of technical experts, including a minimum of one community person, who are managing the investigation of a hazardous waste project at a military base.
Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) Meeting	A meeting of a team of technical experts, in conjunction with community members, that are responsible for reviewing and monitoring the progress of remediation at military base.
Interagency	Meeting designed to bring together agencies involved or interested in a project or decision in order to disseminate information, coordinate actions, review proposals, etc. May also involve private groups or individuals. (NOTE: Once a private individual (not the project proponent) is invited to an interagency meeting, the meeting is open to all members of the public.)
Panel Discussions	Forums put on to present a variety of viewpoints on a specific issue. Usually involves a moderator and may evolve into a debate. Speaking time is limited, with a portion of the time given to questions from the audience or another panel.
Community Advisory Group	A formal assembly of community representatives, meeting regularly to discuss a site's or facility's progress. Membership may or may not include agencies, although agencies are usually invited to participate. Decisions by the group are passed on to the lead agency for consideration.

Briefings

Briefings are designed to provide participants—usually officials or decision-makers with the information they need to answer questions they are likely to receive about the site from community members, constituents, media, or other elected officials. Briefings can be held for one or more participants. Regular briefings can prevent local officials from being "surprised" by the media or community groups with information about the site. Providing officials with this type of information helps build good working relationships and credibility with local government.

The issue of who should conduct the briefings should be determined in consultation with key project staff.

Timing

Site Mitigation briefings generally are held at key points in the investigation and cleanup process, and as significant findings become available or decisions are made. Factors to use in determining specific sites for which DTSC might hold briefings on a regular basis are those which are highly controversial (i.e., extensive media coverage), or in which the community has expressed a high level of interest. Briefings also can be effective for officials in areas where there are many sites. This provides local officials with quick updates on a number of sites, and makes better use of their limited time.

HWM briefings are generally held at key points in the permit or closure plan determination process and as significant findings become available or decisions are made. Generally, the Project Manager or Senior may want to brief the local officials. The level of community concern often determines if a briefing is necessary. Consult with the Public Participation Specialist to determine the need for a briefing.

Notification

Generally, the Project Manager briefs local officials before remedial activity begins at any site; however, briefings may be held upon the request of the officials themselves.

Briefings during the permit process generally occur only on "high" interest facilities. They may occur at any time during the process or when requested by any official.

Format

Briefings should be clearly focused, and should not last for more than one or two hours. Once the initial briefing has been done, future briefings may consist of 5 to 30 minutes. The format should:

- Identify and define the varied interests of those invited to the briefing. For example, at a briefing on the Remedial Investigation report, local health officials probably will be interested in health data, while elected officials may be concerned about how the community will perceive the information and the political implications of proposed next steps.
- Provide a briefing agenda that covers the relevant points, allowing time in the agenda for participants to ask questions about issues of particular interest.

- ♦ Make good use of graphics and visual aids in the presentations.
- ♦ Provide participants with handouts that explain important aspects of the briefing. These handouts should be designed so that officials can refer to them when the briefing is over and be fully versed in the briefing topic.

Preparation

Remember that the briefing is for the benefit of the participants (or participant). Therefore, the time and location must be convenient for them (i.e., during business hours, at City Hall or local government agency offices). (Refer to Exhibit 6-25, “Checklist for Briefings”.)

It is generally true that, while elected and agency officials are familiar with how government agencies function and interact with one another, they often do not have the specific technical background that can help them understand all of the issues at hazardous waste sites/facilities, or interpret that information for others in the community.

Those who plan briefings should be aware of the California Open Public Meeting Act, and other “Sunshine Laws” which restrict the number of elected officials which can attend a non-public meeting. Generally, these laws prohibit a majority of a publicly elected or appointed board, council, commission or committee from meeting out of the public view, unless the subject of the “closed meeting” is properly announced and fits a very narrow set of criteria. (For instance, since most city councils consist of five members, no more than two members may attend a briefing that is not part of an open and properly noticed meeting of that city council.)

While DTSC staff members are not liable for these elected/appointed officials’ actions, staff should not call or participate in briefings or meetings that appear to be in violation of these laws.

It also is possible that the press will want to attend briefings. Staff speaking at the briefing should be aware of this, and might consider having a press officer present at the briefing. A press briefing may be held concurrently with the briefing for local officials.

Exhibit 6-25
Checklist for Briefings

___ Arrange a date, time and place that is convenient for the Briefing recipient.

___ Date, time and location of Briefing:

Date: ____

Time: ____

Location: ______________________________________

___ Notify key state and local officials, citizens, and other interested parties of the Briefing (if applicable)

___ Prepare presentations

___ Prepare and copy any handout materials

___ Conduct dry run

___ Conduct Briefing

___ Follow-up on any questions which were unable to be answered during the Briefing

Workshops

Workshops are semi-structured gatherings or seminars to assist the public to better understand complex or technical project-specific issues. These discussions are usually led by DTSC project staff and/or individuals from other regulatory agencies, Responsible Parties and proponents with technical expertise in specific areas. A key difference between a workshop and a community meeting is the workshop's emphasis on sharing information in a more interactive way.

Following a brief introduction, participants usually break into small groups to focus discussion on designated project issues. A small group size and "round table" format allow for more information discussion than is usually possible in a community meeting. Workshops can be a particularly useful tool in establishing these communication channels because they allow both agency staff and community members to become more familiar with the individuals and issues involved in a site.

Timing

Site Mitigation workshops are most commonly conducted at complex sites, and may be appropriate at the following times:

- During the Remedial Investigation: As results from sampling activities become available, holding a workshop can help make the community aware of the actions that DTSC is taking to investigate the problem. Workshops also allow project staff to become more familiar with specific community concerns about the investigation and cleanup, and to develop field activities and cleanup alternatives that the community understands.
- Upon completion of the draft Remedial Action Plan (RAP)/Removal Action Workplan (RAW), draft Corrective Measure Study (CMS) and Proposed Plan (during the public comment period): Workshops held during this period can help community members better understand why a specific cleanup alternative has been selected as the preferred cleanup alternative. Taking the time to meet on an informal basis with community groups and individuals can alleviate misunderstandings created from misinterpretation of facts or issues.
- Prior to implementation of the remedial design. A workshop at this point can be helpful in explaining to community groups and individuals the details surrounding implementation of a cleanup remedy. Consider holding workshops if the remedial design will have a significant impact on community members (i.e., construction of a treatment facility, increased traffic in the neighborhood, significant increase in noise, need for technical workers to wear personal protective gear).

HWM workshops are conducted for complex proposals, where several groups or individuals have expressed interest in permitting or closure activities. Consider holding workshops at these points:

- During review of permit application or closure plan: A workshop can make the community aware of DTSC actions taken to mitigate community concerns. Workshops encourage interaction between DTSC staff and the community and promote the exchange of ideas and concerns.

- ♦ Upon release of a draft permit or closure plan (during the public comment period): Workshops help community members better understand proposed permit or closure plan conditions and their impacts.
- ♦ Prior to issuance of final permit or closure plan: Workshops explain to community groups and individuals the details surrounding the construction and operation of the facility, the closure process, safety precautions, and inspections by regulatory agencies.
- ♦ During appropriate milestones in the corrective action process (e.g., Remedy Selection): Workshops can explain site conditions and clean-up actions, and solicit input from community members.

Refer to Exhibit 6-29, "Briefing/Workshop/Meeting Timeline," for guidance on establishing a timeline for each of the necessary activities.

Organization issues to consider for a workshop

- ♦ Set starting time when all people are to arrive;
- ♦ Greeting area and staff greeters to welcome attendees;
- ♦ Sign-in Sheet, with Public Records Act disclosure statement, and a space where attendees can indicate how they were informed of the workshop;
- ♦ Agenda explaining options for discussions;
- ♦ Public address (PA) system for remarks;
- ♦ Brief overview of workshop;
- ♦ One large room or several small rooms to accommodate group discussions;
- ♦ Arrange tables in a circle or another configuration that facilitates discussion;
- ♦ Staff at each table, with the appropriate expertise for each topic discussed;
- ♦ Handouts for each technical area discussed;
- ♦ Consider using a "floater" during workshops, to move from table to table, assisting with conflict resolution;
- ♦ Concluding remarks or summary, if appropriate; and,
- ♦ Evaluation forms.

Within two weeks of the workshop, staff who has committed to obtaining information for an individual at the workshop should respond to that person by telephone or in writing, regardless of whether the desired information has been found.

Notifications

Workshops can be announced through the following methods:

- ♦ Newsletters sent out by community groups;

- Flyers sent directly to each name on the mailing list;
- Telephone calls to key community leaders;
- Display advertisements in local newspapers; and,
- Public service announcements or paid advertisements on local radio and television stations.

The written notification should include the name, address, and telephone number of DTSC staff whom interested individuals can contact for more information.

Exhibit 6-27
Checklist for Workshops

___ Purpose of Workshop: ____

___ Estimated number of attendees: ______________________________________

___ Plan the Workshop:

- ___ Identify topics to be presented
- ___ Identify agency officials to present topics, handle registration
- ___ Prepare handouts, other information materials

___ Location of Workshop:

- ___ Facility name, location: ______________________________________
- ___ Contact person at facility: ____________________________________
- ___ Phone number: ____
- ___ Occupancy size: ____
- ___ Handicap accessibility: ___Yes ___No
- ___ Features: ___Restrooms
___Public Telephone
___Adequate Parking
- ___ Date and Time of Workshop:

  Date:______________________________

  Time:______________________________

___ Prepare draft notice announcing Workshop (public notice, flyer)

___ Coordinate internal review of notice

___ Prepare final notice

___ Send Workshop notice

___ Make telephone calls to key community leaders to notifying them of the workshop

Open Houses

Open houses are informal gatherings at which community members drop in and talk directly with individual DTSC staff or other specialists about specific concerns and questions. Open houses differ from community meetings and workshops in several ways:

- ♦ No set agenda and no formal presentations are given;
- ♦ Community members do not arrive at the same time. Rather, attendance is spread over a period of several hours, allowing people to attend at their convenience;
- ♦ Transcripts of the meeting are not prepared; and,
- ♦ Any issue of interest may be discussed during the open house, while workshops generally focus on one specific issue.

Open houses provide an excellent opportunity to:

- ♦ Develop a dialogue with community members;
- ♦ Provide community members, who may feel uncomfortable asking questions at a public meeting, with a more informal forum for doing so;
- ♦ Allow community members to have their concerns addressed and to arrive and depart at their convenience; and,
- ♦ Provide a friendly and congenial atmosphere that improves community perception of DTSC.

The informal atmosphere of the open house personalizes the interactions between project staff and the community. As a result, the DTSC staff have the opportunity to build creditability by attending, being responsive to community concerns, and will be viewed as being individually accountable for their statements, comments, and commitments made during the open house.

Timing

Open houses are held:

- ♦ To maintain contact between the community and DTSC staff;
- ♦ When the community wants an update on a long-term project;
- ♦ Between technical milestones; or,
- ♦ When there are no apparent controversies.

An open house can be initiated by DTSC or upon request of a community at any time during the project.

Organization issues to consider

Organization issues to consider for an open house include:

- ♦ Set "opening" and "closing" times;
- ♦ Ensure staff with expertise in different areas of the investigation and cleanup process are present at information tables to talk with community members;

- Staff greeters to welcome people as they arrive;
- Provide sign-in sheet, with Public Records Act disclosure statement, and a space where attendees can indicate how they heard about the open house;
- Staff greeters should inquire about each attendee's general concerns, and direct that person to the appropriate information table;
- Identification labels should be placed above each information table to aid attendees in locating their area of interest or concern.
- Handouts should be available at information tables (e.g., fact sheets, reports, executive summaries, charts, or background literature) for attendees to take home.
- If an open house is held during a public comment period, forms should be available which allows the public member to leave written comments. Ensure that a collection box for comments is available and visible. Additionally, a court reporter could be on hand to record verbal comments;
- Staff at the information tables should take careful notes about any issues they have committed to investigate further;
- Staff who are investigating issues should respond, within two weeks after the open house, to persons who made the inquiries, regardless of whether the desired information has been found. The response may be by telephone or in writing;
- Consider using a "floater" during open houses. The role of a floater is similar to that of a facilitator. The floater moves from table to table, assisting with conflict resolution. For example, a floater might suggest that DTSC staff follow up on questions that cannot be answered during the open house, or might otherwise facilitate interactions between the community and DTSC and others staffing the open house; and,
- Encourage all attendees to fill out an evaluation form, which can be used later to evaluate the usefulness of this public participation technique.

Notification

Notify community members about the open house in the same manner as for workshops. Prior to the open house, a fact sheet or flyer should be sent out providing background on the issues to be discussed at the open house. Use fact sheets, e-mail and other notification materials to encourage community members to attend the open house with specific questions or issues in mind. Explain the open house format in these materials.

Preparation

Preparation for the open house is similar to that for a community meeting or any other presentation. Staff meetings should take place prior to the open house to determine who will discuss each topic, and to participate in a modified "dry run". Each individual should develop responses to anticipated questions or areas of concern, and should practice these responses. All agency staff participating in the open house should be well-informed and patient when responding to difficult questions and situations.

In addition, consider using and visual aids similar to those used for community meetings. Room size is also a key logistical factor, the room must be large enough to accommodate several "information tables", at which staff will be stationed to talk with community members. Make chairs available.

Open House Logistics

In planning an open house, there are many details to be considered. For the most part, these details are addressed in AMeeting Logistics@.

Exhibit 6-28
Checklist for Open Houses

___ Location for Open House:

- ___ Facility name, location: ______________________________
- ___ Contact person at facility: ______________________________
- ___ Phone number: ______________________________
- ___ Occupancy size: ______________________________
- ___ Handicap accessibility: ___Yes ___No
- ___ Features: ___Restrooms
  ___Public Telephone
  ___Adequate Parking

___ Date and Time of Open House:

Date:______________________________

Time:______________________________

___ Prepare draft notice of Open House (public notice, flyer)

___ Coordinate internal review of notice

___ Prepare final notice

___ Identify agency officials to attend Open House

___ Notify citizens of Open House

- ___ Direct mailing to citizens on project mailing list
- ___ Verify the mailing list is up-to-date
- ___ Request mailing labels
- ___ Public notice in local newspaper(s)

___ Prepare handouts, other informational materials for Open House

___ Make telephone calls to notify key community leaders of the Open House

___ Interpretation

Community Meetings

Community meetings are one of the most commonly used public participation activities. When planned and conducted properly, meetings can be an excellent way to explain remedial site or permit/closure plan issues to community members and to respond to questions and concerns.

Because meetings usually involve large numbers of people (both attendees and participants) they also present opportunities for misunderstandings and misquotes by the public and the media. It is, therefore, essential to plan and prepare properly for all public meetings. Some meetings are required by law or regulation at certain points in the site mitigation or permit/closure plan processes. Other meetings are held at the discretion of the Project Manager or Public Participation Specialist.

When is a meeting appropriate?

Preparing for and conducting meetings can be extremely resource intensive, therefore, it is best to conduct them at sites/facilities in which community members have expressed interest. To determine if a public meeting is appropriate, consider the following issues:

- Regulatory/statutory requirements;
- Target audience;
- Size of target audience;
- Types of information to be conveyed; and,
- Specific issues of repeated concern.

A "rule of thumb" to follow when deciding whether to conduct a meeting is to identify the information that needs to be conveyed and the target audience for the information. Then determine whether a community meeting will convey this information to the audience in the most effective manner. For example, if meetings have been held for the site/facility in the past and only a few people have attended, or if the same issues are raised repeatedly about the site/facility, it might be better for the Project Manager or Public Participation Specialist to meet with interested community members individually or in small groups, or to sponsor workshops that examine the issues in depth. If there are many groups or individuals with general concerns, however, a meeting may be the best vehicle for reaching the community.

Timing

Site Mitigation: The California Health & Safety Code, requires that DTSC hold one or more community meetings during the minimum 30-day public comment period on the draft Remedial Action Plan (RAP), and if public interest exists, Removal Action Workplan (RAW).

In addition to the release of the draft RAP/draft RAW, there are other points in the investigation and cleanup process at which community meetings should be conducted:

- <u>Kick-Off Meetings</u>. These meetings are held at the beginning of the investigation process. Kick-off meeting agendas typically include:

- A discussion of the investigation and cleanup process;
- An explanation of why DTSC is investigating the site;
- A description of the activities proposed in the remedial investigation (RI) workplan; and,
- A question and answer session.

♦ Progress Report Meetings. These are meetings held during the RI to update the community about ongoing activities, sampling results, and the future direction of the project.

Regulatory agencies often find these meetings helpful in receiving input from community members about the technical investigation, particularly regarding areas of the site that may be sources of contamination because of past activities. The typical progress report meeting agenda consists of:

- An update on actions taken and sample results received since the last meeting; and,
- A question and answer session.

HWM: Community meetings are not required during the permit, closure plan or corrective action process. However, community meetings (either large or small) are recommended for "high interest" projects. Timing for recommended community meetings is included in the schedule contained in the Public Participation Plan prepared for a facility project.

There is no formula for determining the most appropriate time to hold a community meeting; however, since the permit/closure plan determination process can be lengthy, DTSC policy recommends that a community meeting be held when sufficient interest develops about the proposed permit application or closure plan to warrant a meeting.

In general, at the beginning of the process, the information supplied by the applicant may be inadequate, and holding a public information meeting may be premature. However, if the decision to hold a meeting is delayed until the very end of the process, there may be insufficient time to address public concerns. The decision of when to hold a community meeting should be based on the judgement of the Public Participation Specialist in consultation with the Project Manager. A meeting also may be scheduled when particular technical milestones are reached. Some other items to consider include the following:

- Number of different groups that have contacted DTSC for information on the facility, and the frequency of communication;
- Media coverage of the facility;
- Quantity and quality of available information that can be used to present a clear picture of the facility to the community;
- Level of environmental activism in the community;
- Complexity of the proposed facility permit or closure plan;

- Existence of risk issues; and,
- Proposed facility type (incinerator and land disposal).

Other concerns, including requests from other governmental agencies and elected officials, also may influence meeting timing. Since meetings are expensive and resource intensive, all timing-related issues should be considered in determining whether to hold a community meeting.

Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Scoping Meetings

The lead agency is encouraged to hold an "early consultation" meeting with all interested parties to identify all concerns, including economic and social effects, that will be addressed in the EIR.

There are two types of scoping meetings:

1) Agency-only scoping meetings are only open to public agencies and the involved consultant under signed contract with the lead agency to prepare the EIR. These meetings are usually held during normal business hours; and,

2) Public scoping meetings are open to interested public members, along with public agencies, and are normally held in the evening.

Public scoping meetings are encouraged for all "high" interest projects, such as, new incinerators, controversial permit renewals, and Treatment Storage and Disposal facilities (TSDs).

The targeted audience for a scoping meeting is dependent upon the level of community and agency interest. To determine which audience the scoping meeting should be directed to, consult with the Public Participation Specialist.

Remedial Action Plan (RAP) / Removal Action Worksplan (RAW) Public Meetings

The California Health & Safety Code, requires that DTSC hold one or more public meetings during the minimum 30-day public comment period on the draft RAP and, if public interest exists, the draft RAW. The purpose of the meeting is to present information and to receive any public comments on the draft RAP/draft RAW. All comments must be answered formally in the "Response to Public Comments" process (also known as a Responsiveness Summary). Specific activities that must be conducted for the public comment period meeting are discussed below.

Public Comment Period and RAP/RAW Meeting

These meetings are held during the required minimum 30-day public comment period on the draft RAP/draft RAW. State law requires that the content of these meetings include:

- An assessment of the degree of contamination;
- The characteristics of the hazardous substances;

- An estimate of the time required to carry out the removal or remedial actions; and,
- A description of the proposed removal or remedial actions.

In addition, DTSC's RAP Policy states that the meeting should also present:

- Risk to human health and the environment posed by site conditions;
- A discussion of all alternatives considered, including those rejected; and
- The rationale for selection of the proposed removal or remedial action.

A typical RAP/RAW meeting agenda to meet these requirements includes:

- Public involvement opportunities;
- An overview of the cleanup alternatives;
- A description of the proposed alternative;
- A question and answer period to clarify the information presented; and,
- A comment period.

Although not required by State law or regulation, it is in DTSC's RAP Policy that a transcript be made of the comments received during the public meeting. This allows the actual comments to be entered into the administrative record, thus protecting the rights of the community and the agency receiving the comments.

In addition to the above, the California Health and Safety Code, also requires that the regulatory agency:

- Use a newspaper notice to announce the public comment period (ensure that a display ad is used and that the date, time and place of the public meeting is included in the ad and place the ad on DTSC's web site);
- Notify contiguous property owners, affected agencies;
- Post notices near the proposed removal site; and
- Evaluate and respond to all comments received during the public comment period.

Community Meeting for a Proposed Plan (on NPL sites)

Similar to a RAP/RAW Community Meeting, the Proposed Plan Community Meeting shares the cleanup alternatives evaluated in the Feasibility Study and then explains the rational for choosing a preferred alternative. CERCLA is the law governing this type of meeting. It requires that a transcript of the meeting be kept on record. The law also requires that:

- The proposed plan be released and announced at the start of the comment period (usually this is done in a fact sheet type format);
- The proposed plan summary and a notice of the meeting be published in a local newspaper of general circulation; and,

- All comments received during the comment period (including the meeting) be addressed in the Response to Public Comments document.

For additional information, please see U.S. EPA's *Community Relations in Superfund: A Handbook* (EPA/540/R-92/009, January 1992).

Other Meetings

Other types of meetings may be appropriate at certain points during a project in order to keep involved and interested parties up-to-date on the processes and progress of a project. The following describes those other types of meetings.

Small Group Meetings

Small informal meetings with community groups are useful for discussing site-related issues of particular interest to a group. These meetings can be held at any point during the site mitigation process at the request of the community group. The meetings should be conducted by teams of individuals familiar with different aspects of the site, such as the risk assessment and the Remedial Investigation. This type of approach ensures that most, if not all, questions can be answered immediately, and that community members have an opportunity to meet with DTSC and other regulatory agency staff in an informal setting.

The small group meetings will be held at the request of community groups. DTSC will announce its availability for meetings in a number of ways:

- Fact Sheets;
- Media outlets such as public notices, press releases, and public service announcements;
- Newspaper advertisements;
- Announcements in newsletters published by civic, environmental, or trade groups (i.e., Chambers of Commerce, Farm Bureau, Sierra Club, American Association of Retired Persons, Rotary Club, etc.); and,
- Direct mail notification to community members on the site mailing list.

Technical Review Committee (TRC) Meeting

Traditionally, this is a meeting of a team of technical experts, including a minimum of one community person, who are managing the investigation of a hazardous waste project at a military base. However, some Restoration Advisory Boards (RAB) have designated subcommittees with this same name. In those instances, the subcomittee is made up of RAB committee members only.

Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) Meeting

A meeting of a team of technical experts, in conjunction with community members, that are responsible for reviewing and monitoring the progress of remediation at closing military bases. The RAB community members are to share the information with the larger community, thus increasing the communication between the site Project Managers and the interested community.

Community Advisory Board (CAB) Meeting	Similar to a RAB, this is a meeting between technical experts intimately working on a site and interested community members. The purpose of the meeting is to share information with the community on a regular basis and receive their comments and concerns. In turn, the CAB community members are to act as liaisons with the larger community that they represent, thus increasing the amount of information being shared.
Interagency Meetings	Designed to bring together agencies involved or interested in a project or decision in order to disseminate information, coordinate actions, review proposals, etc. May also involve private groups or individuals. (Note: Once a private individual is invited to an interagency meeting, the meeting is open to all members of the public.)
Panel Discussions	Forums put on to present a variety of viewpoints on a specific issue. Usually involve a moderator and may evolve into a debate. Speaking time is limited, with a portion of the time given to questions from the audience or another panel. Panelists may vary, but should present the full spectrum of viewpoints within a community.
Community Advisory Group Meetings	A formal assembly of community leaders, meeting regularly to discuss a site's or facility's progress. Membership may or may not include agencies, although agencies are usually invited to participate. Decisions by the group are passed on to the lead agency for consideration.

Meeting Planning & Organization

The success of a meeting depends, in large part, on adequate preparation. There are many issues and details to consider when planning a meeting, from checking on audio/visual equipment to making sure that all speakers are familiar with their topics. Prior to the meeting, the goals should be identified and staff responsibilities should be outlined.

Meeting Goals

First, decide the purpose of the meeting—what DTSC hopes to gain from the meeting and what the community should gain from the meeting. These goals should be kept in mind throughout the preparation phase and should be used to tailor the presentations. Any meeting may have a number of goals, which might include:

- Helping the community to better understand technical activities under the site mitigation or permit/closure plan processes;
- Soliciting community input on proposed agency actions;
- Highlighting progress made by DTSC at a site cleanup;
- Explaining to community members the site cleanup or permit/closure plan processes and how they can participate in those processes;
- Increasing DTSC credibility; or,

- Helping the community understand the regulatory structure and why site mitigation or permit/closure plan determinations can take a long time to complete.

The Project Manager or Public Participation Specialist may wish to call the key community members involved at the site and review the agenda with them to make sure that the community's concerns also will be addressed at the meeting.

Determine Staff Responsibility

Determine at the start of the planning process the roles and responsibilities of project team members. The team may consist of the Project Manager, Public Participation Specialist, Responsible Party, Zone Contractor, and other DTSC staff such as toxicologists or geologists. The project team should use the "Community Meeting/Hearing Checklist" form to decide who will be responsible for:

- Meeting room reservations and equipment;
- Public notification;
- Meeting agenda development;
- Practice sessions;
- Graphics or handouts;
- Meeting facilitation; and,
- Speaker assignments and topics.

The Public Participation Specialist should be consulted for assistance in acquiring meeting rooms, and developing agendas, graphics, and practice sessions. If there is contractor support for the project, contractor staff can assist in many of these activities.

In addition, the team must decide who will facilitate the meeting and what topics each speaker will cover in his/her presentation. Each team member should recognize that he/she has a responsibility to both the project team and the community to spend the necessary amount of time preparing for the meeting to ensure that the presentation is clear, concise, and given at a level that community members will understand. This responsibility includes making time commitments for planning meetings, "dry run" practice sessions, and post-meeting critique sessions.

Meeting Logistics

In planning a meeting, there are many details to be considered, including:

- Location;
- Date and Time;
- Arrangements of room seating;
- Equipment; and,
- Audio and Visual Aids.
- Access to the internet.

Each of these details is discussed below and, in addition, the project team should utilize the "Community Meeting/Hearing Checklist" form (Exhibit 6-30).

Meeting Location

The meeting should be held in a location that is convenient for interested community members. Suitable meeting rooms will be able to accommodate comfortably from 15 up to 200 people, depending on the nature of the meeting and the anticipated attendance. Sometimes even larger accommodations are necessary. Possible meeting locations will be identified in the Public Participation Plan. Many cities and towns have community centers with rooms suitable for meetings. Classrooms or multi-purpose rooms in local schools, and meeting rooms in libraries or government centers also can be good locations for workshops. Work with staff in city halls, libraries, school district offices, or chambers of commerce to locate available meeting facilities.

The location should be a neutral one for all participants. The main objective of any public meeting is to hear the concerns/issues from all segments of the community and to respond to those concerns. If a factor, such as the meeting location, alienates a segment of the attendees, it can hinder the overall effectiveness of the meeting. For instance, if there is a faction that is at odds with City Hall, it would not be a good idea to hold the public meeting there. Project staff should consult the Public Participation Plan prior to making major decisions that affect an entire community; this makes it imperative that the Public Participation Plan be a thoroughly researched document that is truly representative of the community. The meeting location must be accessible to all, including disabled persons.

Meeting Date and Time

Make sure that key people interested in the site/facility (i.e., community group representatives and elected officials) will be able to attend the meeting on the suggested date. The Public Participation Specialist should consider the best time for meetings for that community. A retirement community may wish to hold meetings during weekday afternoons, or a community of commuters may be unavailable at times other than a weekend evening. When setting a meeting date, think about holidays or other events that might prevent people from attending the meeting (i.e., income tax deadline, World Series, school vacations). Also consider other meetings being held at the same time that might conflict with the DTSC meeting, such as meetings sponsored by the local congressional representative, PTA, or City Council. Set the date and time well ahead of the meeting date so community members have sufficient notice.

Arrangements

Refer to the “Community Meeting/Hearing Checklist” (Exhibit 6-30):

- Make meeting room arrangements as early as possible, preferably at least one month in advance;
- The meeting location must be determined before the meeting can be announced;
- Determine if there is a usage fee for the facility. (Note: as a government agency, DTSC often is excused from such fees; however, if there are fees associated with having custodians available for setting up the room, etc., complete a DTSC Service Authorizations (form DTSC 1013); and,
- Make certain that the meeting room is available for the adequate period of time needed to complete the meeting (e.g., 7-10 p.m.). It is important to the success of the meeting that participants are comfortable in the meeting room, so check:

- Lighting (locations of the switches and which switches control which lights), and if light adjustments may be made without a custodian;
- Air conditioning/heating system, and if temperature adjustments may be made without a custodian; and,
- Seating arrangements and tables, and if rearrangements may be made without a custodian.
- Meeting room must be accessible to the disabled.

It is advisable to:

- Arrive at the meeting location at least one hour before the meeting starts to make sure the room is properly set up and equipped; and,
- Post signs outside of or in the building that direct people to the meeting room.

Meeting room operators may ask DTSC staff (or contractors) to sign "save-harmless" insurance certification. Be aware that the State is self-insured and employees are not authorized to sign such certification. A sample Department of General Services (DGS) letter, stating these facts, is shown in the Appendix and should be requested from DGS if a "save-harmless" insurance certification is requested by the operator of a facility in which a DTSC meeting is being arranged. The DGS, Risk and Insurance Management's telephone number is (916) 324-6434. A standard form also exists for use with school districts (see the Public Participation Specialist for a copy).

Interpreter Services

If the site/facility is in an area where community members are non-English-speaking, consider having the meeting interpreted simultaneously into the language that the community speaks (e.g., Spanish, Vietnamese, American Sign Language).

Interpreting may be conducted using different approaches:

- Simultaneous Interpretation - When only a small number of people in the group require the service or when headphones are used to convey the interpreted messages.
- Stitched Interpretation - When the interpreter interprets a sentence or phrase, alternating with the English-speaking person making the presentation.

If an interpreter is necessary:

- Arrange for interpreters far in advance of meeting date;
- Determine if these services are available free through local agencies; <u>or</u> identify certified interpreters which provide these services. Interpreter services may be available through a DTSC contract, a Responsible Party, a proponent, or may be purchased. Fees are generally involved, therefore, a DTSC Service Authorizations (form DTSC 1013) must be completed;
- Include in the meeting notice to community members that interpretation will be available at the meeting (ensure that the meeting notice is translated into the language that the community speaks);

- Consider translating handouts distributed at the meeting;
- If possible, send the interpreter an advance copy of the prepared speeches.
- Ensure that the interpreter interprets everything said in the meeting so that everyone can have their questions and concerns addressed; and,
- If necessary, provide for American Sign Language interpretation.

Equipment

Refer to the "Community Meeting/Hearing Checklist" (Exhibit 6-30). The meeting room must include a:

- Screen or large empty wall space for visual presentations;
- Public address (microphone) system, depending on the size of the group;
- Table at the entrance to the room for the sign-in sheet and handouts;
- Sign-in sheet (with pens) to identify and track those community members attending meetings for the site/facility, and assist in building the mailing list.

The meeting facility may be equipped with the following items; if not, be certain to bring them from the office:

- Slide/overhead projectors;
- Screens;
- Flip charts;
- Microphones; or,
- Other items needed.

Often schools and community centers can provide this equipment; however, it must be requested when reserving the room. Be certain to check all equipment for proper working order before the meeting (e.g., batteries and light bulbs are working properly). Consider bring spare bulbs and batteries as insurance.

Supplies to remember for meeting:

- Sign-in sheet with pens
- Handouts;
- Transparencies;
- Slides; or,
- Other items needed.

Before leaving for a meeting, be sure to look at the "Community Meeting/Hearing Checklist" (Exhibit 6-30) to ensure nothing important is omitted.

Meeting Debriefing

At the end of each meeting, ask the participants to fill out an evaluation sheet to help identify areas in which the community needs more information.

The debriefing session, held within two to three days of the meeting, is attended by the DTSC meeting participants. The debriefing is to critique the meeting, improve on future meetings, and identify plans for following up on any action items.

Information from the evaluation form can assist in the debriefing process, as well as identify the needs and concerns of meeting participants. Critiquing the meeting can help to refine presentations and discover which techniques, speaking styles, and visual aids are effective in communicating with the public.

Exhibit 6-29

Briefing/Workshop/Meeting Timeline

Activity	Production Time (in work days) 30	25	20	15	10	5	Mail Date
Determine preferred date	X						0
Find meeting location	X						0
Check with key community members to determine if they will be able to attend; ask if there are items that should be discussed at the meeting	X						0
Contact newspaper (or DTSC contract provider) and other media to determine billing needs and proper format for information		X					0
Meet with staff who will make presentations at the meeting to establish agenda and goals; determine responsibilities		X					0
If topics are identified that cannot be addressed by staff, identify individuals with appropriate expertise and ask them to participate		X					0
Begin working with graphic artist to develop graphics		X					0
Develop flyer for distribution to community members			X				0
Develop newspaper advertisements and/or public service announcements (PSAs)			X				0
Arrange for court reporter, if applicable			X				0
Circulate ads or PSAs for concurrence				X			0
Review graphics and revise if necessary				X			0
Send ads or PSAs to media or DTSC contract provider					X		0
Locate necessary equipment and determine billing needs and/or reserve equipment						X	0
Make certain that ads/PSAs are appearing as scheduled						X	0
First dry run, with graphics						X	0
Revise graphics, if necessary						X	0
Determine which graphics should be used as handouts; print copies						X	0
Second dry run, with evaluation						X	0
Make sure equipment will be available						X	0
Make sure all handouts, view graphs, and other graphics are ready						X	0
Pick up equipment						X	0
Review checklist						X	0
Arrive at meeting place at least one hour early to check room, set up equipment, chairs and tables (earlier if a third dry run will be held in the meeting room)						X	0

Exhibit 6-30

Community Meeting/Hearing Checklist

Planning Meeting Date: __________ **Project:** ______________________________

Meeting/Hearing Purpose: ______________________________ **Targeted Date:** __________

Participants: ______________________________

____

Meeting/Hearing Preparation Activities	Responsible Person(s)	Due Date
___ Set meeting/hearing goals	____________	______
___ Set date and time	____________	______
___ Set meeting location (schedule) (map)	____________	______
___ Prepare Service Authorization	____________	______
___ Send Insurance Certificate Letter	____________	______
___ Expected number of people attending	____________	______
___ Seating capacity	____________	______
___ Contact person at facility and phone number	____________	______
___ Schedule court reporter (contract)	____________	______
___ Schedule interpreter (contract)	____________	______
___ Notify panel participants	____________	______
___ Prepare agenda	____________	______
___ Prepare meeting evaluation forms	____________	______
___ Prepare public comment forms	____________	______
___ Prepare comments for keynote speaker/hearing officer/facilitator	____________	______
___ Prepare oral presentations	____________	______
___ Select facilitator (name)	____________	______
___ Prepare visuals (slides, graphics, display)	____________	______
___ Set day, time and place for participants rehearsal	____________	______
___ Select rehearsal facilitator (name)	____________	______
___ Outline meeting/hearing ground rules	____________	______
___ Follow-up coaching for participants	____________	______
___ Reserve equipment	____________	______
___ Arrangement for room, keys, etc.	____________	______
___ Bring equipment to meeting room (if applicable)	____________	______
___ Coordinate with the Public Information Officer (PIO)	____________	______
___ Set date/time for debriefing meeting	____________	______
___ Select debriefing facilitator (name)	____________	______

Exhibit 6-30 ♦ Community Meeting/Hearing Checklist (cont'd)

Announcement Activities	Responsible Person(s)	Due Date
___ Call key agencies	____________	______
___ Print mailing labels	____________	______
___ Prepare and send fact sheet	____________	______
___ Prepare and send press release	____________	______
___ Prepare and place radio ad	____________	______
___ Prepare and place display ad	____________	______
___ Send materials to repositories	____________	______
___ Prepare and send meeting flyers to mailing list	____________	______
Room Arrangement Activities		
___ Room layout	____________	______
___ Room set-up (tables, chairs, press)	____________	______
___ Room opens (time)	____________	______
___ Room closes (time)	____________	______
___ Set-up time	____________	______
___ Security: YES NO	____________	______
___ Janitorial services	____________	______
___ Restrooms (open/location)	____________	______
___ Lights (switch location(s)	____________	______
___ Ventilation	____________	______
___ First Aid Supplies	____________	______
___ Refreshments	____________	______
___ Lecterns	____________	______
___ Rental fees?	____________	______
___ Return room to original condition	____________	______
Equipment		
___ Slide projector/bulbs	____________	______
___ Overhead projector/bulbs	____________	______
___ Film projector	____________	______
___ Projector bulbs	____________	______
___ VCR/Monitor	____________	______
___ Screen	____________	______
___ Microphones (stationary/remote)	____________	______
___ Cassette recorder/tapes/batteries	____________	______
___ Press hook-up	____________	______
___ 35mm camera/tape	____________	______
___ Video camera/tape	____________	______
___ Extension cords/3-prong plugs	____________	______
___ Pointers	____________	______

Exhibit 6-30 ♦ Community Meeting/Hearing Checklist (cont'd)

Supplies	Responsible Person(s)	Due Date
___ Name plates/name tags	____________	______
___ Directional signs	____________	______
___ Copies of agenda/evaluation forms	____________	______
___ Copies of most recent fact sheet	____________	______
___ Copies of generic fact sheets	____________	______
___ 3 x 5 index cards	____________	______
___ Pens	____________	______
___ Markers	____________	______
___ Easel/flip chart	____________	______
___ Blank paper and poster paper	____________	______
___ Chalk	____________	______
___ Eraser	____________	______
___ Masking tape	____________	______
___ Scissors	____________	______
___ Business cards	____________	______
___ Pointer	____________	______
Meeting Follow-up Activities		
___ Return equipment	____________	______
___ Debriefing among participants to evaluate meeting/hearing	____________	______
___ Respond to requests for information	____________	______
___ Distribute transcripts/minutes	____________	______
___ Action items list	____________	______
___ Response to public comments	____________	______
___ Prepare meeting evaluation and distribute	____________	______
___ Send "thank-you" letters	____________	______

Meetings - Notifications

Public Notification of Meeting

At least two weeks prior to the meeting, the public, local officials, and other interested parties should be notified of the meeting date, time, location, purpose, and where to call for additional information. Methods of public notification might include the following:

Advertisements

Permit public hearings, Remedial Action Plan (RAP)/Removal Action Workplan (RAW) meetings and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) meetings have specific notification requirements. Refer to the specific sections in this manual, which discuss these processes. The California Health and Safety Code, requires that DTSC notify the public of the draft Remedial Action Plan meeting in a newspaper advertisement. Similar to draft Remedial Action Plan community meetings, other types of community meetings, also use display advertisements in local newspapers to inform the public of upcoming meetings.

Direct Notices

Direct notices announcing the meeting should be sent to all individuals on the project mailing list. The announcement (e.g., fact sheet, flyer, letter) will advertise the meeting date, time, location, purpose, and where to call for additional information. (Refer to “Fact Sheets” in Chapter 6C.)

Supplementary Methods of Notification

In some situations, particularly those in which the target audience does not read the main newspaper or does not speak English as a primary language, it may be necessary to identify supplementary methods of notifying the public. They may include:

- ♦ Public service announcements on local radio and television programs (translated if necessary);
- ♦ Advertisements in community newspapers or newsletters and,
- ♦ Working with community group leaders to notify community members via word-of-mouth.
- ♦ Post on DTSC web site and e-mail notices.

Meetings - Presentations

Planning

The key to a successful public meeting is to effectively communicate information and ideas to the community, and provide an organized forum where the community can express its views. The use of effective speakers, interesting audiovisual aids, and effective meeting facilitation can help meet these goals.

Try to anticipate questions or concerns that community members may raise that would best be addressed by someone outside of the designated meeting team. For example, the community may have concerns about the health effects of contaminants found at the site/facility; therefore, a toxicologist who is familiar with the issues should be present to answer any questions or make a presentation. Project staff in attendance should be familiar with the resources available both within DTSC and from other agencies, such as the Air Resources Board or the Regional Water Quality Control Board. County or federal agencies also working at the site/facility should be included in the meeting. Any speakers from other agencies should be included in the meeting planning process, and should participate in dry runs.

Project staff participating in the meeting should be prepared to answer questions from participants, especially questions that are anticipated to be particularly difficult. Prepare for these "Question & Answers" sessions by using a two-step process: 1) develops a list of questions that the community might reasonably ask; and, 2) develop answers to these questions. If there are questions that speakers cannot answer, identify someone who is better qualified to address that topic, and ask that person to help develop responses to the questions and attend the meeting.

Developing

As speakers develop their presentations, they should consider the audience they will be addressing by identifying the audience's:

- ♦ Knowledge of the site/facility;
- ♦ Familiarity with the technical issues surrounding the site/facility;
- ♦ Familiarity with government regulatory programs and agencies; and,
- ♦ Interest in specific issues such as health effects or real estate values.

Presentations should be organized to address these community concerns and interests. When developing presentations:

- ♦ Direct presentation to the audience;
- ♦ Limit the use and abuse of regulatory and technical jargon; and,
- ♦ Pay attention to how issues of "risk" are communicated.

Outline

One of the tools used to ensure a concise, cohesive presentation is an outline. In preparing an outline, the presenter needs to consider what information he/she would like to impart to the audience. Presentations must have a purpose, and the initial definition of that purpose rests with the presenter. The Public Participation Specialist will provide input to ensure that the presentation is well rounded and that it anticipates the questions and concerns of the specific community.

The first question the presenter must ask when developing the outline is "What activities/events have taken place regarding the site/facility since the last time DTSC communicated with the community?" The answer to this question can serve as the nucleus of the meeting agenda.

- ♦ The information should be evaluated and broken down into specific categories and issues;
- ♦ Examination of these categories and issues then are needed to identify other related information or sub-categories that might be relevant to the presentation;
- ♦ After evaluating the above, the presenter should develop an outline that addresses all of the new and relevant information that the community needs.

Use of Jargon

Speakers must consider the audience's level of understanding of the issues being discussed:

- ♦ Avoid acronyms, jargon, and technical terms wherever possible;
- ♦ If using some terms is unavoidable, send a fact sheet to expected meeting attendees prior to the meeting to introduce them to the meeting topics, including definitions of commonly used terms (also make the fact sheet available at the meeting);
- ♦ Further determine whether the average community member will understand the terms used;
- ♦ For example, many people are not familiar with a term like "extraction wells", so the purpose and operation of an extraction well could be explained, using a drawing of a well to help in the explanation.

Delivery

"Style" is another important issue to be aware of when making a presentation. A presentation that is short, easy to understand, and accompanied with simple graphics may fail to inform the audience if it is presented poorly. In general, the success of a presentation is as dependent on the speaker's self-confidence as it is on content. Most people could benefit from participation in groups geared towards developing and enhancing public speaking skills, such as Toastmasters (a non-profit, non-partisan group designed to help people become better public speakers). These types of organizations allow individuals to practice speaking on a range of topics in front of small, non-threatening groups. Short of requiring that all staff who participates in public meetings join Toastmasters, the following suggestions can be followed:

- ♦ Practice giving the presentation for as many people as possible. Do not hesitate to deliver it to friends, family, and colleagues.
- ♦ Practice speaking in front of a mirror, to have an idea of how one appears to the audience.
- ♦ Record the presentation on video or audio tape and watch/listen to it. Identify areas of stumbling, words that are too technical, or points of uncertainty.

Another factor that will increase the quality of presentations is ensuring that the speaker is comfortable with the topic and prepared to answer questions. Anticipate ahead of time the questions that community members will ask. Ensure that the speaker can answer the questions or that appropriate individuals are present. It is important to hold practice sessions prior to the meeting.

Explaining the level of risk that a site/facility presents to human health and the environment often poses difficult communication problems. The information provided in this section is designed to help project staff in thinking about issues of risk communication. It is by no means a complete guide to risk communication, which is a relatively new and inexact field. Those who anticipate involvement in risk communication should pursue training opportunities and read available outside information on the subject.

Risk communication is problematic because the concepts being communicated are difficult for people to conceptualize. For example, the following statements are not easy to understand:

> *"The risk of developing cancer as a result of exposure to TCE at this site/facility is one in one million."*
>
> **or**
>
> *"The levels of dioxin found in soil increased from three parts per billion (ppb) to one part per million (ppm)."*

These statements are confusing for two reasons: 1) they use jargon (three ppb, one ppm), and, 2) they combine levels of measurement, further confusing the listener. Most people do not have a reference for numbers like one in one million or five parts per billion. When communicating large numbers, consider translating them into figures the audience will understand, or expanding the definition (i.e., "DTSC has found three parts dioxin per one billion parts of soil at the site.").

Risk communication is difficult because each individual brings to the discussion personal values that influence how he/she perceives the risk.

- Risk communication must be careful to differentiate between risks that result from direct choices of action (i.e., smoking, flying in a plane) and those which result from indirect or involuntary choices (i.e., the contamination found in soil or groundwater as a result of neighboring industrial operations).
- There is a profound psychological difference between how people perceive a risk that results from a direct choice and one that results from indirect choice.
- The potential impacts of direct and indirect choices should not be compared.
- Risk communicators may wish to encourage discussions of the ways in which our choice of lifestyles and patterns of consumption directly influence industrial production.

Community Loyalties and Economic Interest

Project staff must be aware of the community's loyalties and economic interests.

- In some instances, a responsible party may be the economic backbone of a community, and community members will be reluctant to acknowledge that an industrial operation may pose a potential risk to their health.

- ♦ In such cases, community members are likely to cite all the people they know who have worked at the facility all their lives with no adverse health effects.
- ♦ Be sure to state the facts of the risk — what is known about exposure to the chemical and why government agencies are concerned about the levels found at this site/facility.
- ♦ By adhering to the facts of the situation, DTSC is less likely to be accused of "taking sides" or having a hidden agenda.
- ♦ DTSC must be careful not to be perceived as trying to "sugar coat" the potential risks posed by a site.

Meetings - Audio & Visual Aids

When making oral presentations, it is helpful to use visual aids with "graphics" or "bullet points" to illustrate the main points of the discussion. As speakers organize their presentations, they should consider issues for which an illustration or list of bullet points would be appropriate. These visual aids can be made into transparencies that are projected onto a screen, and copies can be handed out to attendees so they can follow the main points of the discussion. Providing participants with copies of the important points of the discussion allows them to focus their attention on the details of the presentation, rather than on taking notes. Background materials, large maps, or charts can be placed around the meeting room for participants to view during breaks.

<u>Issues to consider when using visual aids:</u> While visual aids can be helpful to a meeting, they also can be detrimental if used incorrectly. Using visual aids that viewers cannot see or do not understand will confuse and frustrate the viewer, rather than help the viewer understand the presentation. When designing visual aids, consider whether or not someone who is unfamiliar with the topic would understand the graphic or chart. Like fact sheets, visual aids should not include technical jargon and complicated drawings. Test the effectiveness of a visual aid by asking a few people who are not involved with the project and do not have a technical background whether they understand it.

Sometimes speakers rely too heavily on visual aids to convey their message. Using many visual aids, and changing them quickly, can distract the viewer, with emphasis being placed on the changing visuals rather than on the content of each visual and accompanying narrative. Also distracting are visual aids that are too complicated, or in which type or drawings are so small that they are not readable from across the room. Each visual aid should serve a specific purpose in the presentation and answer specific questions. Be certain that a "pointer" is available to emphasize important elements in the presentation.

When using visual aids, the lights in the room usually are partially or completely turned off, which can be conducive to falling asleep, if many visuals are used. Therefore, intersperse visual aids throughout the meeting, using them to break up the meeting by providing the audience with a visual representation of the speaker's presentation. When used in moderation, visual aids can be an effective tool for conveying important information to the community.

Meetings - Practice Sessions

All DTSC staff participating in the meeting must rehearse their presentations before the meeting occurs. These “dry run” sessions help to:

- Identify points in each person’s presentation that need further clarification or could be enhanced with visual aids;
- Improve the speaker’s confidence in his/her public speaking abilities; and,
- Identify weak spots in the meeting where more information is needed, as well as additional questions that might not have been considered.

The number of dry runs needed for each meeting will vary. Plan for one or two dry runs initially, leaving room on the calendar for more, if deemed necessary. <u>All who will be making presentations at the meeting must attend the dry run.</u> A good format for the dry run is:

- Each individual to make his/her presentation, or review the main points of the presentation;
- After each presentation, the rest of the group pose questions that have arisen during the presentation, and offer suggestions on how the presentation can be enhanced;
- Consider these sessions as team efforts, opportunities for the project staff to work together to develop the best possible format and presentation for the meeting;
- To have at least one person present at the dry run who is familiar with the site/facility but will not be making a presentation at the meeting (i.e., public participation staff, contractor);
- To have the person scheduled to facilitate the public meeting attend the dry run, to provide suggestions on continuity between speakers, and perspective on how the meeting flows.

Meetings - Facilitation

The facilitator's role is to manage the flow of communication during the meeting to ensure that all concerned citizens have the opportunity to formally present their comments. The facilitator monitors the communication dynamics of the meeting, and adjusts the meeting format, agenda or other variables as necessary to keep the meeting productive for all parties.

- Effective facilitation can be the key to a successful meeting.
- The facilitator will be chosen during the planning stage of the meeting. The Public Participation Specialist normally serves as the meeting facilitator, although the Public Participation Specialist Supervisor can be brought in for controversial meetings.
- The facilitator should be involved in setting the agenda and making sure that topics flow logically. Meeting agendas should: 1) be available for meeting participants; 2) include ample time for community members to ask questions and make comments; and, 3) allow for additional items to be added before the meeting is in progress.
- The facilitator is responsible for directing questions and comments from the audience to the appropriate panel member for response.
- The facilitator will make certain that, if a questions or comment cannot be addressed immediately, it is returned to later in the meeting, or is answered later.
- The facilitator can intervene with panel members who get "stuck", defensive, or try to answer questions that they are not qualified to answer.
- A facilitator is particularly helpful for situations in which the community is hostile toward or does not trust DTSC or the responsible party.
- An impartial facilitator can help ensure that meeting participants focus on the issues being discussed.
- Facilitator techniques which can be useful:
    - Active listening
    - Acknowledging issues
    - Writing down issues and concerns
    - Recording issues/concerns, actions and questions on a flip chart
    - Willingness to stay and listen to comments and questions
    - Provide opportunity to meet again
    - Avoid over-controlling the meeting

Successful meeting facilitation will ensure that the meeting is a fair forum for <u>all</u> community members to express their views.